

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): ~~A highly pure ultra fine SiO_x powder, which is A~~
powder represented by the formula SiO_x wherein
x is from 0.6 to ~~1.8, which has 1.8 and~~
the powder has a specific surface area of at least 10 m²/g and m²/g, ~~and which has a~~
total content of Na, Fe, Al and Cl of at most 10 ppm.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The SiO_x powder according to Claim 1, ~~which is~~
~~represented by the formula SiO_x wherein x is from 0.9 to 1.6.~~

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The SiO_x powder according to Claim 1, ~~1 or 2~~,
wherein the specific surface area is at least 50 m²/g and the total content of Na, Fe, Al and Cl
is at most 5 ppm.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A method for producing the ~~highly pure ultra fine~~
SiO_x powder as defined in Claim 1, ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3~~, which comprises
reacting a monosilane gas with a gas capable of oxidizing the monosilane gas in a
non-oxidizing gas atmosphere under a pressure of from 10 to 1000 kPa at a temperature of
from 500 to 1000°C.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The ~~production~~ method according to Claim 4,
wherein the ~~amount~~ content (in molar ratio) of the non-oxidizing gas is at least ~~double~~ twice
the total amount of the monosilane gas and oxygen participating in the oxidation of the gas
capable of oxidizing the monosilane gas. ~~gas by molar ratio.~~

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The ~~production~~ method according to Claim ~~4, 4 or 5,~~ wherein the gas capable of oxidizing the monosilane gas is oxygen, air, NO₂, CO₂ or H₂O.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The ~~production~~ method according to Claim ~~4, 4, 5 or~~ 6, wherein the non-oxidizing gas is argon or helium.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The ~~production~~ method according to ~~any one of~~ Claims ~~4 to 7,~~ wherein the reaction Claim 4, wherein ~~is carried out in a non-oxidizing gas atmosphere under a~~ the pressure ~~of~~ is from 50 to 300 kPa ~~at a~~ and the temperature ~~of~~ is from 500 to 1000°C.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): An interlayer dielectric film of a semiconductor device, a gas barrier film of a solar battery, a gas barrier film of a food packaging film or a protective film of an optical component, which ~~is formed from~~ comprises the SiO_x powder as defined in Claim 1. ~~any one of Claims 1 to 3.~~